



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

## WIFE OF THE GOVERNOR OF LOWER KHAM: TIBET

She is from southern Tibet and was very gracious in her hospitality to the American physician and his family while they were in Gartok. She is of small stature and is quite fond of her Tibetan dog. She is a woman of great ability and would sometimes dance at an evening entertainment to the accompaniment of the Scottish bagpipes (see page 297).



# LIFE AMONG THE PEOPLE OF EASTERN TIBET

BY DR. A. L. SHELTON

FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS MEDICAL MISSIONARY AT BATANG, NEAR THE CHINO-TIBETAN BORDER

WHERE East meets West on the border line between China and Tibet, the broad rôles that have come to be understood by those brief terms are completely reversed. There it is the East, personified by China, that has represented the greater progress; and Tibet, which stretches far to the west, that has preferred to exist for centuries behind the world's greatest rampart of mountains, inhospitable to the knocking of ideas more modern than its own.

Of all the great forces that have molded the outside world, only Buddhism, it might be said, has left its impress behind Tibet's towering border, and even that force, having once gained access, has been almost swallowed up in the devil-worship which is the highest religion that the Tibetans themselves have evolved.

Until recent years, practically nothing was known of Tibet by Caucasians except the doubtful information contained in the writings of a few adventurous travelers who in the Middle Ages made brief excursions into the country. The few resolute modern explorers who won their way behind the barriers of mountains and deserts were invariably turned back after brief sojourns, usually in the sparsely settled regions of the north.

LHASA REVEALED TO THE WORLD IN 1904

The expedition of Sir Francis Younghusband to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, in 1904 made that hitherto forbidden city known to the outside world. More recent visits of travelers have added still further to the general knowledge in regard to Lhasa and a few other important valley towns close to the Indian border.\*

But just as a familiarity with New York or Paris leaves much to be learned about the United States or France, so the knowledge that has been gained about Lhasa and its neighboring communities fails to afford an adequate picture of

Tibet and the Tibetans. In regard to the nomadic people of the uplands and life in the villages of the agriculturists, that dot the many smaller valleys of Tibet, much has remained unknown.

While the complete picture of Tibet and its inhabitants probably will not be filled in for many years, my long sojourn in the border country where western China meets eastern Tibet, and my close association with its people, who with a very few exceptions are the people of Tibet, enable me to sketch in a few lines regarding Tibetan conditions outside the larger cities.

## SCENE OF STRIFE BETWEEN TIBETANS AND CHINESE

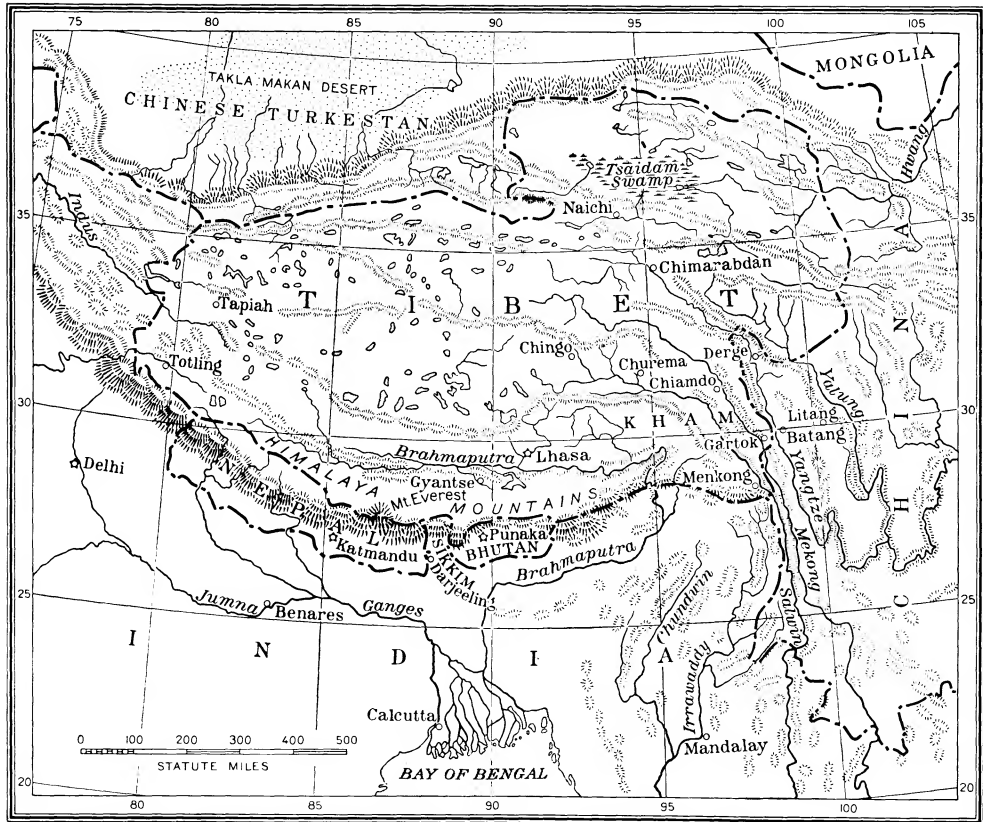
The southern portion of the border between China proper and Tibet is approximately the valley of the Yangtze, where that great river flows almost due south at the eastern end of the Himalayas before making a great swing to the northward through the most populous part of China. Where the Yangtze separates China and Tibet it is already a river of considerable size, its waters being between 700 and 1,000 miles along their way in their 3,400-mile journey to the sea.

Quite apart from the political divisions and nominal government, the region on both sides of the Yangtze where it flows south is in reality Tibetan. A territory approximately the area of Alabama, with Batang as its center, has been the scene in recent years of much strife between the Tibetans and the soldiers of China, whose officials were expelled from Tibet during the Chinese revolution in 1912.

Such authority as China maintains in this border region is most tenuous, and to the west of the Yangtze Valley it may be considered to vanish entirely.

This region contains both Protestant and Roman Catholic missions, and connected with the former is a medical mission. It marks the closest approach from the east of Christian influences and modern conceptions of sanitation, medicine, and surgery toward Lhasa, strong-

\* See, in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, "The World's Strangest Capital," by John Claude White (March, 1916), and "The Most Extraordinary City in the World," by Dr. Shaoching H. Chuan (October, 1912).



Drawn by James M. Darley

A MAP OF TIBET AND BORDER COUNTRIES

The meagerness of authentic information concerning the interior of Tibet is indicated by the fact that the population of its 463,000 square miles is variously estimated at from 1,500,000 to 6,000,000. The only census ever taken of the country was that conducted by the Chinese nearly two hundred years ago, showing 316,000 lamas (monks) and 635,000 laity. For a more detailed map of this region, see the National Geographic Society's "Map of Asia," published as a supplement with the May *GEOGRAPHIC*.

hold of Lamaism—the degenerate Buddhism of Tibet.

The border region is a country of mountains. Batang, the chief city, is one of the lowest points, and yet its altitude is 9,000 feet above sea-level, nearly twice that of Denver.

Most of the surrounding country is 12,000 to 15,000 feet high, the latter altitude being more than 500 feet higher than Mt. Whitney, California, highest peak in the United States proper. From this great upland rise numerous peaks 20,000 feet and more in height.

The view from the summits of some of the passes that must be traversed in traveling about this marvelously rugged country can hardly be surpassed anywhere in the world. The panorama for hun-

dreds of miles on a clear day is one of countless high peaks interspersed with greater snowy masses that exceed in height the topmost pinnacles of all other continents.

Below timber-line are some fine forests, and the Alpine-like flowers of the short summer are exceedingly beautiful. Here and there among the mountains are clear, sparkling lakes, their waters so cold that in most of them fish cannot live.

#### STRANGE MYTHS AS TO THE ORIGIN OF TIBETANS

Kham, the easternmost province of Tibet, gives its color to the entire border region, and its people are said to be the most robust of all Tibetans.

Little is known of the origin and an-



Photograph by Dr. A. I. Shelton

## THE GOVERNOR OF LOWER KHAM, HIS WIFE AND PIPER

This piper was brought down from Chiamdo, a ten days' journey, for the entertainment of the American physician and his family. The Tibetans have adopted the Scottish bagpipes as their national military instrument. It was startling to hear the piper playing "The Cock of the North," "The Campbells are Coming," and "The Drunken Piper." He played with great skill, for the Tibetan instructors have learned their music in India (see page 293).

cestry of the Tibetans. This is probably due in large part to the rigid exclusion of men of science and other travelers. The Tibetans themselves dismiss the subject with hopeless fairy tales and legends. One of these has it that the progenitors of the race were "a she-devil of the Himalayas" and an ape from the plains of Hindustan.

To the lay observer there is no resemblance whatever between the Tibetans and

the Chinese, nor are they similar to the Malaysians. In features and characteristics they resemble the American Indians more nearly, perhaps, than any other distinct type, although in color and other characteristic features there is an indication that they may have sprung from the original Mongol people.

Many of the people of Kham are nomads, who tend their flocks of sheep and yak as they graze over the uplands, and



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### THE HIGH PRIEST OF BATANG WITH HIS ATTENDANTS

Both Chinese and Tibetan influences are seen in the features and dress of the attendants, while the rifle suggests the inroad of Western ideas.

live in black yak-hair tents. Others engage in a crude sort of farming in the valleys where the altitude is low enough for grain to mature.

The nomads live the year round in their tents, seldom even entering a house. When the lower slopes of the mountains become free from snow in the spring, they begin their upward pilgrimage with their herds, closely following the receding snow-line, until in summer they are living far up in the highlands and on the sides of the peaks.

When winter begins to set in they

make the reverse journey, going down to the valleys only as fast as the descending snow-line drives them. In this way they are able to utilize the supply of grass to best advantage.

The herders remain close to the snow also because their yak thrive best in a cold temperature and cannot, in fact, stand any great degree of heat, especially if introduced into the warmer temperature suddenly.

So carefully must the yak's predilection for cold be indulged that traders bringing supplies in summer from the



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

THE KING OF DERGE, HIS TWO WIVES, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

Derge for many years was an independent state, but is now under Tibetan rule. The Chinese and Tibetan influences are here plainly seen.

high country to Batang will not drive their animals into the town. They unload ten miles from their supposed destination, at a point about 12,000 feet in altitude, and the Batang consignees must provide transportation for the remainder of the distance to the 9,000-foot level.

The agricultural people of the lower valleys live in substantial houses of mud with flat roofs. In constructing the mud walls the Tibetans use forms of parallel boards not unlike the forms used in the United States for molding walls of concrete. The mud is beaten into the forms until it is puddled, and when dry it is very hard (see page 307).

The agriculturists have few animals. Yak are employed for plowing, however, being brought down from the higher country for the purpose at the proper time.

CRUDE PLOWS DRAWN BY YAK

The farm operations are carried on under conditions that a well-equipped American farmer would consider a heavy handicap. The plows used are made en-

tirely of wood, with a single handle. They have been developed beyond the most primitive types of wooden plows, however, having removable digging parts, which are replaced when worn or broken.

The front end of the beam of the plow is attached to the middle of a wooden bar, each end of which is bound to the horns of a yak. One person usually leads the yak team, while another walks behind, holding the handle of the crude implement. The work of sowing and plowing is done mostly by the men, while the women do the greater part of the harvesting, a division of labor the reason for which is not apparent.

The harvested grain is carried to the tops of the houses, where it is threshed on the flat roofs by means of flails. Primitive mills are set up along the streams, where the grain is ground raw into flour and parched into "tsamba," the latter a particularly important article in the Tibetan diet. The mills are of a simple type common in many lands, consisting of a stationary lower stone and an upper stone revolved on the lower by



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

THE AUTOGRAPHED PHOTOGRAPH OF THE DALAI LAMA, A PRIZED POSSESSION OF THE  
GALON LAMA

The Galon Lama, or "receiver of commands," ranks immediately below the ruler of Tibet, who resides in Lhasa. The Galon Lama of Chiamdo was the commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army at the time when Dr. Shelton was asked to aid the wounded and sick warriors of the Tibetan forces (see text, page 319).





Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF JALA AND HER BRIDEGROOM

She is dressed in her bridal robes, with her husband (in the center) standing at her right. Jala, of which Tachienlu is the capital, is two provinces east of Batang.

means of a shaft extending upward through a central hole in the fixed stone. The shaft is attached to a water-wheel below.

#### "GOING TO BED" MEANS CURLING UP ON THE FLOOR

The living quarters in the homes of the valley folk usually consist of a single large room, in which all work, including the cooking, is done, and where the members of the family eat and sleep.

The comforts in such homes are meager indeed. In few establishments is there even the semblance of a bed. In the ordinary houses "going to bed" means merely loosening the girdle, opening the sheepskin garment, and curling up on the floor with the feet toward the stove, which is an essential feature of all habitations in this high, cold country.

The stoves are built of mud, with a fireplace below and a hole in the top into which pots may be set for cooking. The stove is usually built to one side of the living room, and the members of the family, on retiring for the night,

range themselves in a fan-shaped group about it.

Families possessing domestic animals share their houses with them. In two-storied houses the lower floor is the stable, and through it the living quarters are reached. In some one-storied houses the front portion is given up to the animals, while the family lives in the rear.

#### BARLEY MEAL AND BUTTER TEA THE TIBETAN MENU

The food of the Tibetans is most monotonous to an American or European, accustomed to variety in his diet. They live almost the year round on two things, parched barley meal, called "tsamba," and "butter tea," neither of which seems at first view either appetizing or sustaining.

Tsamba is made by parching barley and then grinding it into a very fine flour. It becomes a sort of emergency ration, for, being parched, it requires no cooking. When Tibetans are on journeys or are wandering about with their flocks and herds, they carry tsamba in small leather bags inside their coats, thus always hav-



A THRILLING HORSEBACK RIDE ACROSS THE MEKONG RIVER

With his mount securely trussed to the rope bridge, the owner supplies his own motive power, hand over hand, as he pulls himself and beast across the chasm with the river far below.



Photographs by Dr. A. L. Shelton

CORACLES, OR SKIN BOATS, USED FOR CROSSING TIBETAN STREAMS

Such a craft has a framework of wattles over which is stretched green yak hides. The seams are sealed with pitch, which makes the boat practically watertight. Unless a person is careful, he is liable to stick his heel through the bottom, in which case it becomes necessary for him to keep it there until the boat has reached the other shore. A coracle is propelled by a native, who puts the broad paddle far out into the water and pulls it toward him.



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### PART OF THE LIBRARY IN THE LITANG LAMASERY

In Kham the sacred Buddhist writings are printed from blocks such as were first used in China, or are written by hand. The printing of religious books is one of the principal industries of the town of Litang. The Buddhist Bible is a work of 108 volumes and the companion commentary work is of equal bulk (see page 320).

ing at hand the materials for a hasty meal.

In preparing the other principal article of their diet the Tibetans first make a strong liquid by boiling the coarse Chinese tea which they prize most highly. The concoction is strained into a churn and to it are added a lump of butter, more or less stale, and a handful of salt. The queer mixture is then churned into an emulsion.

The typical meal among the valley folk of Tibet, and among many of the nomads as well, begins with the drinking of two or three cups of butter tea—a beverage which the Caucasian feels a constant inclination to speak of in quotation-marks, for to him it is neither tea, soup, nor gravy, but a combination of the three.

As the Tibetan drinks his hot butter tea, he continually blows back from the rim of his bowl the film of butter that rises to the top. After several bowls of the beverage have been drunk, there is a considerable accumulation of butter. The

bowl is then half filled with the tea emulsion. Into the hot liquid, rich in butter fat, tsamba is now poured, to be kneaded by the fingers into lumps and eaten.

#### THE WOODEN BOWL IS LICKED CLEAN AFTER EACH MEAL

Knives, forks, and spoons are unknown in Tibet—all eating is done with fingers. The wooden bowl is carried in the sheep-skin garment next to the skin, and each time after being used it is licked clean with the tongue and replaced in the garment.

To an observer from Europe or America it seems impossible that the Tibetans, leading a fairly active life in a country of rigorous climate, could be satisfied on tsamba and butter tea year in and year out. Their queer foods must constitute a fairly well-balanced ration, however, for they thrive on them.

When the occasion and their economic status permit, Tibetans also eat meat. Especially is this true of the nomads liv-



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### BANDIT BRAVE OR TIBETAN TROUBADOUR?

The horseman is making a circuit of the walls of a ruined lamasery at Batang. This monastery was once one of the most flourishing establishments in eastern Tibet, but was destroyed by the Chinese during one of their invasions. The Tibetans are not allowed to rebuild damaged lamaseries or to erect new ones, for the Chinese conceive these religious communities to be centers of rebellion.

ing far from the grain-producing valleys, to whom tsamba is a luxury. The meat is sometimes dried and preserved for future cooking, sometimes cooked while fresh.

#### FIRST USERS OF CONDENSED MILK

Most Tibetan meat eaters, however, are kindred spirits of Dr. Samuel Johnson, for, like him, they prefer their meat "high" and "gamy." But, after all, they go much further than the author of "Rasselas," for they eat the spoiled meat

raw. Naturally, stomach trouble is rife among the Tibetan nomads.

The Tibetans of this region were probably the original users of condensed milk in the form of dry lumps, for they have prepared this article of food for many centuries. Fresh milk is poured into a churn which is never washed and the liquid therefore curdles almost the instant it comes into contact with the germ-incrusted walls of the container. It is then churned and the butter is extracted.

After the butter is extracted the milk is boiled in a large iron pot until it reaches the consistency of thick syrup. It is then poured out in a thin sheet and allowed to dry, after which it is broken into small pieces and stored. The lumps often become as hard as stone, and to eat them dry is out of the question. The nomads solve the problem by substituting the dry milk for tsamba, soaking it in their butter tea. It thus be-

comes softened to some extent and can be chewed.

The pastoral Tibetans produce a great deal of butter. Much they consume themselves, but there is a considerable surplus, which those in reach of the grain-producing valleys take to the lowlands and exchange for tsamba. There is such a quantity of yak hair in the butter that an observer would almost assume that it was a prized ingredient, but its presence does not lower the value of the product in the estimation of the native consumers.

Salt is so important to the Tibetans that in some parts of the country it is a medium of exchange. Its production constitutes an industry of considerable consequence in some of the valleys of the eastern border region, particularly at Yengin, where salt water may be obtained from shallow wells.

#### SALT WATER IS EVAPORATED ON MUD ROOFS

Flat roofs of mud, beaten on to a carpet of small poles supported by larger poles, are constructed. Along the edges raised rims are built. The beating or puddling makes the mud surfaces practically impervious to water. Women carry kegs of salt water on their backs to the roofs, climbing up notched poles that serve as ladders. The water is poured on the flat surfaces and evaporated by the wind.

After the water has disappeared the thin film of dry salt left on the roofs is collected, but not, it should be added, without considerable quantities of dirt and grit which are swept up with it.

Apparently the natives do not object to the dirt, for the salt, as it comes from the roofs, is carried as an article of commerce all over eastern Tibet. It is very cheap at the wells, but becomes progressively dear as the distance increases. In the remote districts the price of the salt becomes almost prohibitive and it is eagerly sought after. The salt produced near Batang is used by the staff of the American mission, but the precaution is taken to refine it by dissolving it, allowing the tiny stones and mud to settle, and boiling down the clear salt solution.

#### "ONE PERSON, ONE GARMENT"

The Tibetans are almost wholly independent of the outside world in the matter of clothing materials, and this is especially true of the nomads and village folk. The great majority of the nomads wear garments of raw sheepskin. Nor is their wardrobe more extensive than the variety of its materials. The usual rule is one person, one garment.

The sheepskin garments are made with the wool inside. A single garment will last for years, and naturally in the course of time comes to have other inhabitants than its owner. In warm weather the



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

HE IS 78 YEARS OLD, BUT HE IS CARRYING  
100 POUNDS OF TEA FROM YACHOW  
TO TACHIENLU, SZECHUAN

Sometimes as much as 280 catties (370 pounds) are carried across these mountain passes by a Chinese coolie. Often boys 12 to 15 years old are seen carrying as much as 75 pounds for days at a time.

wearers of the sheepskins throw the top part of the garment off and go about naked to the waist, or, removing one arm, permit the skin gown to hang from the other.

The women among the nomads spin the wool from their flocks on a rude spin-



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

## TIBETAN HOUSES IN THE ROBBER-INFESTED BAD LANDS

These homes are built primarily for protection. With the exception of the main entrance, there is no opening until the third story is reached. This style of architecture greatly simplifies the problem of defense against marauders.

ning-wheel. This is little more than a small disk of wood fastened to an upright, the whole being twirled with thumb and finger.

The wool, which is fastened to the end of the upright, is thus twisted into thread; the thread is then woven on a crude loom into very heavy woolen cloth about six inches wide. From this cloth, purchased with tsamba and barley meal, the people of the lower valley, where the climate is not so cold, make their gown-like garments.

It is by no means easy to judge the financial status of a Tibetan by the kind of clothes he wears. One may see men dressed in rough sheepskin, with their hair hanging in tangles down their backs and their appearance indicating that they had never had a bath in their lives, bargain for something worth hundreds of dollars.

If such an individual decides to purchase the article, he will pull out of his dirty gown a leather bag of gold dust and unconcernedly weigh out a sufficient

quantity of the shining powder to pay for it. Less uncouth purchasers will probably use in their transactions the rupees of Chinese mintage, which constitute the most generally employed medium of exchange in Tibet. Chinese brick tea, like salt, is also used in some sections in place of money.

MONOGAMY, POLYGAMY, AND POLYANDRY  
FLOURISH

The marriage customs of the people of Tibet present a peculiar combination of monogamy, polygamy, and polyandry—the last particularly characteristic of the country, though monogamy is actually the prevailing system. Under the polyandrous system, the eldest son of a family marries a woman and she becomes the common wife of himself and his brothers.

Polyandry is far more common, especially among the nomads, than one is likely to believe at first. Under this system a woman usually marries three or four brothers, but one case came under



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### A TIBETAN HOUSE IN THE COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION

Poles are used to hold together parallel boards, between which mud is puddled. Then the forms are raised and another layer of closely packed earth added. Similar methods are used from Shanghai to Russian Turkestan (see text, page 299).

my observation in which a woman had six brothers for husbands.

Under the ordinary arrangement, one husband will take care of the home in the valley, if there is one; another will be in charge of the yak or sheep in the uplands; a third will be the trader, taking care of the caravan, while others will be assigned special duties.

#### MULTIPLE HUSBANDS AND WIVES DWELL IN HARMONY

The oldest brother is considered the father and the other brothers the uncles of the family. In such families the children usually are not numerous, an average family of children being three to five.

If a family has no sons, but has daughters, one of them usually is kept in the home, and a husband is brought in for her and carries on the family succession. The remaining daughters are normally given to other families. In a few cases, however, where there are two daughters, one husband is brought in and a polygamous household is established.

It is surprising how well the families

of multiple husbands and multiple wives get along together. One with Western ideas would imagine that there would be a great deal of ill feeling and fighting, but in both polyandrous and polygamous families the members seem to live together in peace and harmony.

The usual feeling in these households is exemplified by the following incident: While on a journey in the border country I was called one night, by some folk in a village where I had put up, to see a man who was ill. When I told them that the sick man was dying, both the other husband, who was a brother, and the common wife cried bitterly.

#### THE WOMAN IS HEAD OF THE HOME

As opposed to the usual harmony in polyandrous households, I knew of one case the moral to which seems to be that all the husbands should belong to the same race. In this case a Chinaman and Tibetan went into partnership with one wife. For a while all seemed to go well, but finally the Chinaman became dissatisfied and chased the Tibetan out.



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

A SCENE IN THE TIBETAN PLAY WHICH IS GIVEN EVERY FALL AT BATANG

The performance occupies four days. During the festivity people from all parts of the country lay aside their usual labors and come to enjoy the outing. Every one is free to attend, but those who are able to do so are expected to make presents, either of money, meat, flour, grain, butter, or any other useful article, to the group of players for that year. The plays are historical in character.

Woman, on the whole, occupies a better position in Tibet than in a great many of the Eastern countries. She is practically master in the home and usually all transactions of a business nature concerning the family must have her sanction. Nor is she confined and prevented from going out as she pleases.

Once while I was traveling in what we have christened the "Bad Lands," to the west of Batang, I observed a custom I had not met with in any other part of the border country, which illustrated the privileged character of the Tibetan wife. In that region, after a woman marries and goes into the home in which she is to live, no other woman is permitted to go

inside the door. If she wishes to visit with any of the neighbors or they with her, the visiting must be done outside the houses.

ONE PERSON IN SEVEN IS A LAMA OR  
PRIEST

Any reference to the social institutions of the Tibetans would be incomplete without mention of the lamas. They are the monks or priests of Tibetan Buddhism and live in great monasteries called lamaseries. Nearly every family in the country has at least one son who is a lama. Fully one-seventh of the entire population of Tibet, it is estimated, live in the lamaseries, being supported, of





Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

## THE AUDIENCE AT AN HISTORICAL PLAY IN BATANG, TIBET

course, in the main, by the remainder of the population.

The lamas have acquired much money and land. They add to their incomes from contributions by lending money to the common people, renting them land, and in time of sickness and death giving medicines and saying prayers.

Some of the priests in the local monasteries are fairly well educated, according to the standards of the country, having spent some years in Lhasa at the great monasteries. After returning to their native homes they are looked upon as very holy men.

The towns of Tibet are in most cases small groups of dwelling-houses and a few shops in valleys at the foot of steep and winding paths leading to some monastery that towers above on the steep mountain side.

In the lamaseries is to be found whatever there is of art in Tibet, most valuable objects eventually finding their way into the hands of the priests, who on the death of a person may take much of his personal property in payment for prayers on his behalf.

The strong hold which lamaism, with its great privileges accorded to the priests, has upon the Tibetans is due to the fact that the inhabitants of this mountain-rimmed country are perhaps the most

religious people on earth. Their faith is nominally Buddhism, but in reality it is more truly a veneer of Buddhism over the old Bon religion, a religion of devil-worship. They are exceedingly superstitious, believing in ghosts and in the daily interference of devils in their affairs.

One day the old man who taught me the Tibetan language came in limping. I asked the cause of his lameness.

"Why," said he, in a matter-of-fact way, "a devil just now hit me on the ankle out there and I sprained it."

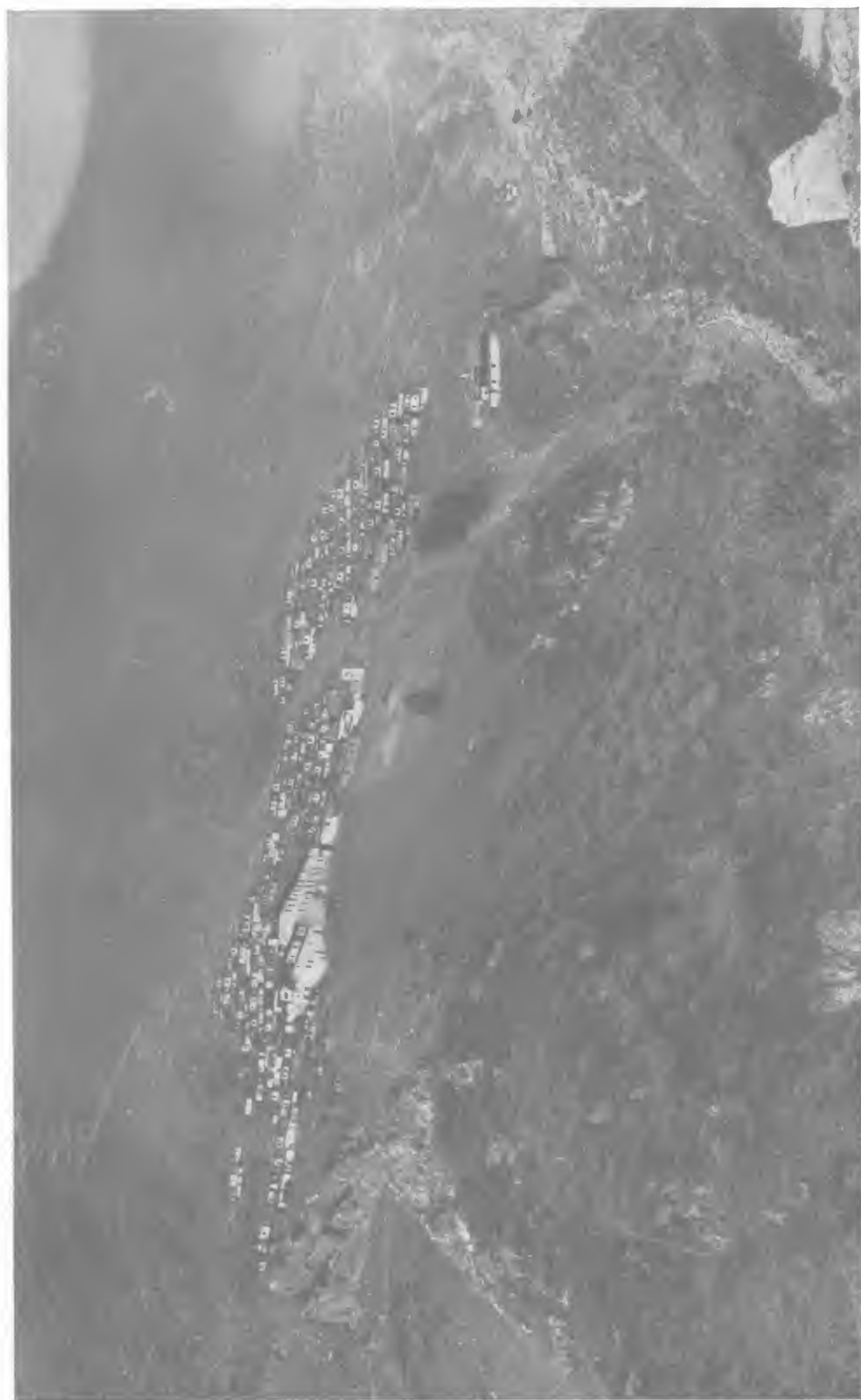
"Don't you think in reality you just stepped on a stone and turned your ankle," I said. "Wasn't that what hurt you?"

"Don't you think I know when a devil hits me?" he rejoined, with the tone of one defending the most obvious of common-sense statements.

In its form of government, Tibet is one of the few remaining theocracies in the world. The Dalai Lama of Lhasa combines in his person the functions of head of the lamaist church and supreme temporal ruler of Tibet. His chief governmental assistants are also priests.

The lamas, even the ordinary monks, occupy a privileged position, constituting in effect a class to themselves.

Next in rank to the ruling lamas are



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

GARTOK MONASTERY, WHERE THOUSANDS OF IMAGES ARE MADE AND GILDED FOR SALE

This home of idolatry is situated about nine days' journey from Batang. With their crude facilities the monks are unable to apply a cheap gilt to their idols, but are forced to use a rather heavy coat of pure gold (see page 319).



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

A VIEW OF YEN-GIN, FAMOUS FOR ITS SALT WELLS, WHICH HAVE BEEN PRODUCTIVE FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS

Salt water from these wells is poured out upon raised platforms specially built to hold water. After the wind evaporates the water, the salt is swept up and sold with the dirt which is mixed with it. The white spots are platforms incrusts with dried salt (see text, page 305).



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF BATANG SURROUNDED BY TERRACED FIELDS

The white buildings on the hill are the hospital and residence of the American mission. Note the head of the horse in the foreground; the photograph was taken from the vantage point of its back.

the lay officials of the government. The next lower step in social gradation leads to the headmen of the villages, usually the wealthiest residents of the localities. Next in order are the wealthy villagers not headmen, and below these come the ordinary folk. At the bottom of the social ladder are the servants and slaves of the well-to-do.

#### PRAYER-WHEELS OPERATED BY WATER

In education the Tibetans are very backward, there being nothing in the

country in the nature of public instruction. A few of the more wealthy families hire a priest to come into their homes to teach their sons. The "education" which these favored ones obtain, however, is usually of very little value to them, for a great many of the priests are not able to read or write, but have simply learned to say from memory long strings of prayers or the inevitable "Om-mani-padme-hum," the repetition of which is supposed to insure the laying up of great merit.



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

## A STREET SCENE IN BATANG

Batang, or Paanhsien, derives most of its importance from the Tibetan trade route, which passes through it on its way from Yachow to Chiamdo, connecting the Yangtze Valley with the highlands of Tibet (see map, page 296).

This sacred combination of sounds—a sort of religious abracadabra—is a thing on which the Tibetans and other votaries of lamaism rely for comfort in this life and for assurance of happiness after death, or to prevent their being reborn in a lower scale of life. It is said thousands of times a day by the faithful, as they go about their work. Often it is counted off on strings of beads.

The Tibetan Buddhists believe also that there is merit in “repeating” this magical formula mechanically. Accordingly it is written on yards and yards of

paper which are placed in prayer-wheels. In most cases these wheels are twirled by the hands of the worshipers, but so confident are they of the efficacy of mechanical prayer that they construct what might be termed power prayer-wheels operated by water.

The very winds are harnessed to pray for the Tibetans, for the mystic phrase is written upon thousands of flags, which are strung upon poles and ropes. Wind-mills connected to prayer-wheels carry the mechanical prayer still farther.

The sacred words are even carved on



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

A TYPICAL TIBETAN VILLAGE, SHOWING THE PECULIAR DISTRIBUTION OF THE HOUSES IN GROUPS UPON THE HILLSIDE

For a description of the Tibetan dwellings, see illustrations on pages 306 and 307 and text, page 299.



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### A CAMP OF NOMADS IN THE TIBETAN HIGHLANDS

These nomads change their camps from the valleys to the mountain heights according to the season of the year. In the spring they follow the new grass as it appears below the ever-receding snow-line. In the fall, as the snow-line descends again, they keep just below it with their herds of yak, until in midwinter they are in the lowest valleys (see page 208).





PRAYER-FLAGS SET UP NEAR THE GRAVE OF A PROMINENT TIBETAN

As the tinkling temple bells of Mandalay direct one's thoughts to unseen forces, so the Tibetan prayer-flags flutter in the wind, which bloweth where it listeth and is seldom still (see page 309).



Photographs by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### WHERE PRAYERS ENCOMPASS THE EARTH

In Tibet, the land of mechanical prayer, the winds and waters are utilized in seeking the favor of gods and devils. Huge piles of stones, each inscribed with a prayer, parallel the trails and dot the landscape (see text, pages 309 and 312).



stones, which are placed in great piles along the roads. Some of these piles are many feet high and represent years of labor spent by priests in carving and placing them. In no place in Tibet can the eye or ear escape the omnipresent "Om-mani-padme-hum."

#### HUNTING THE MUSK DEER IS A DYING INDUSTRY

The country folk of Tibet, as the villagers and nomads may be called in distinction from the thousands of residents of the lamaseries and the few traders of the larger towns, engage in a number of minor industries in addition to tilling the soil and tending their herds and flocks.

In the past a considerable number of Tibetans have hunted musk deer, collecting the musk for export. Owing to the rapid decrease in the number of animals, however, the exports have fallen off markedly and the industry may be said to be a dying one.

The methods employed have been largely responsible for the dwindling importance of the industry. The deer have been hunted ordinarily not with guns, but by means of snares set in the paths which they frequent. They are caught by the feet and swung completely off the ground. Although the musk is obtained only from the males, the snares, of course, catch both males and females.

Wonderful and awe-inspiring concoctions of Chinese medicine contribute much to the industries of the Tibetans. The collection of deer horns "in the velvet" is a case in point. Large numbers



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### SACRED MANI PILES OF CARVED STONES: TIBET

On these stones are carved the magic formula, "Om-mani-padme-hum." The Tibetans are unable to explain the meaning of this phrase, but the most generally accepted translation is "Oh, Jewel in the Lotus!" which has been analyzed as indicating an expression of reverence for the Dalai Lama. The lotus flower is symbolic of heaven, of heavenly birth (see text, page 309).

of deer are killed each June and July, primarily for the horns, which are then in the proper stage of growth. The horns are sold to the Chinese, by whom they are prized as one of the best tonic ingredients in all their pharmacopœia.

In the spring and summer months the Tibetans also dig plants and collect fungi and other articles of supposed medicinal value for export to the Chinese market.

One of these ingredients very highly prized by the Chinese is the grass worm. When dug it looks like a small plant a part of which is a worm. In reality it is



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

ONE OF THE LARGE MANI PILES NEAR BATANG CONTAINING COUNTLESS STONES ON EACH OF WHICH IS CARVED A MAGICAL PRAYER FORMULA

the remains of a grub which has been attacked by a fungus. The grub is killed by the fungus, the root of the latter, which is in the grub, absorbing its body. Only the outer husk is left in the semblance of the original grub. This seeming combination of animal and vegetable life is not only used as a medicine, but is also eaten as a delicacy.

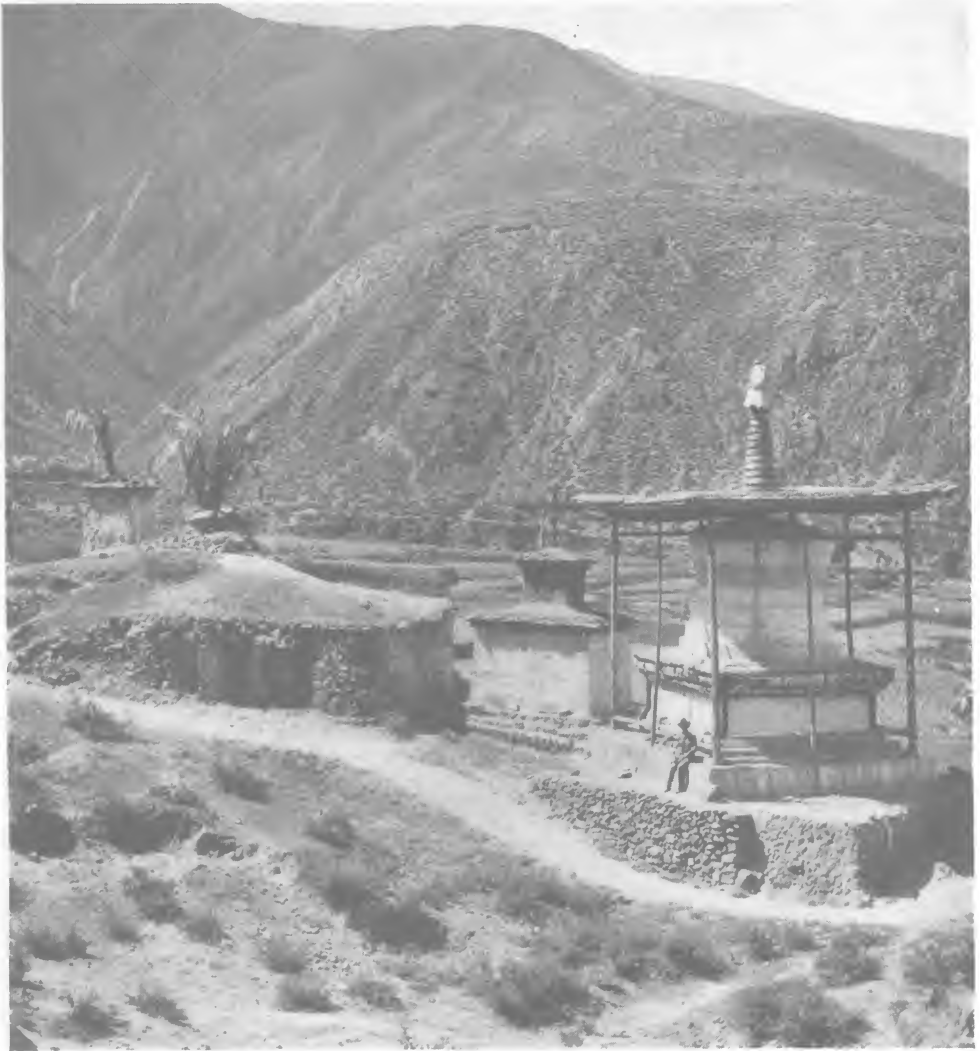
#### METAL WORK AMONG THE TIBETANS

Some mining is carried on by the Tibetans of the eastern border region, but the industry is of small proportions.

The products mined include lead, gold, and iron. Iron is used for swords, some of the most elaborately ornamented commanding a high price.

The Tibetans love to embellish their scabbards with silver, coral, and turquoise, and some of them are fine examples of workmanship. Iron is also used in the manufacture of crude guns, or was until within the last few years, when it became possible to obtain firearms of Western manufacture.

In Chiamdo, principal town of Kham, Tibetan workers in iron make of that



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### AN ELABORATE CHORTEN (SHRINE) NEAR BATANG

Chortens are a common sight in Tibet and the surrounding lands. In Peking there are large Lama towers similar to these shrines, which are built solid, though they may contain valued relics.

metal large wine flasks, which are much sought after throughout Tibet. I spent some time in Chiamdo in 1918 caring for the wounded, after the fighting in the border country between Chinese and Tibetans, and became well acquainted with the Galon Lama, stationed there. He is one of three Galons, literally "receivers of commands," who rank immediately below the Dalai Lama. This Galon was commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army, and while serving in that capacity had given up his ecclesiastical functions.

When I left the city he presented me with two of the famous hammered-iron objects of Tibetan handicraft, into which had been pounded figures in gold and silver. They are crude but very beautiful.

In some of the lamaseries of Tibet the monks make and gild idols for sale all over the country. The Gartok lamasery near Batang turns out thousands of the images. With their crude facilities, the monks are unable to gild the idols as it would be done by a modern Western



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### YAK CROSSING THE MEKONG RIVER ON THE BRIDGE AT CHIAMDO

Throughout the whole region of western China and eastern Tibet, bridges are few and primitive, the suspension type, ranging all the way from single ropes to heavy structures, being most popular (see illustration, page 302).

process, but must apply a rather heavy coat of pure gold. Because of this, the prices are high.

#### THE BUDDHIST BIBLE IS A 108-VOLUME WORK

At Litang, about a hundred miles to the east of Batang, where there is a large lamasery, and in the lamasery of Derge, about 200 miles above Batang, in the Yangtze Valley, the printing of religious books is an industry of importance.

The Kanjur, which is the Buddhist Bible, and the Tanjur, its commentary, each comprising 108 volumes, are printed at the two lamaseries from blocks on which characters are carved. The blocks occupy many large rooms and the printing of one set requires the work of many men for many days.

In Litang, until recently, there was a copy of the Tanjur which was written out by hand in gold and silver. The paper had first been lacquered with Chinese ink.



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

## A YAK CARAVAN WAITING TO BE LOADED

The Tibetan yak is not only a reliable beast of burden and a provider of good beef, milk, and butter, but also furnishes a fine, silky hair which is woven into fabrics. The yak tail is used as a ceremonial fly-switch and is often represented in Indian sculptures.

The gold and silver fluids in which the characters were written were made by rubbing the precious metals on a rough stone and mixing the powder with glue water. It was one of the most perfect pieces of work I have ever seen. It was destroyed a few years ago by Chinese soldiers who understood nothing of its value.

As in most of the world's border lands at times, brigandage is rife in Kham, especially among the nomads. Bandits prey both upon other Tibetans and upon the caravans that pass between China and Tibet, and all travelers go armed.

## WHERE FEUDS RAGE

Until a few years ago, the most formidable weapons employed in this part of the world were the old firelocks of local manufacture. More recently, however, many modern firearms have been introduced, with the result that the depredations of the outlaws are now much more serious.

Rough and but partly civilized as these people of eastern Tibet are, it is natural

that their conceptions of personal and family honor should lead to the blood feuds that rage among folk of similar development throughout the world. A few years ago I had a particularly dramatic introduction to their custom of "halen," as they call their feuds.

I was on a mountain road about five days journey to the south of Batang and, with my traveling companions, was approaching a village early one morning. Before we came in sight of the dwellings we saw a large column of smoke rising. Hastening down the mountain side and through some woods, we found that the house of the headman was in ruins and was a mass of flames.

Soon we came upon a dead man lying in the road. Farther on was the body of a child, which had been run through with a bayonet. We came upon body after body of men and women—twelve in all.

The story of the devastation, which the excited survivors of the village finally told us, was this: Six or eight years before, the murdered headman had been a



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

UNTIL, RECENTLY, BOWS AND ARROWS WERE IN USE AS WEAPONS IN TIBET, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN SUPPLANTED BY FIREARMS

The Tibetans of the Province of Kham spend most of their time out of doors and are a sturdy people. Games are uncommon, but there are many tests of strength, skill, and marksmanship.

leader in a party which, by command of some Chinese official, had exterminated another family. Twelve people had been killed. However, the party had not done its work with complete thoroughness, for one boy of about fifteen years of age had escaped.

This boy had fled to inner Tibet, had spent the intervening years nursing his grudge, and the night before, in company with some twenty or thirty friends, he had come to the village and had succeeded in killing twelve members of the headman's family.

By a strange coincidence, one boy of about fourteen years, belonging to the headman's family, had escaped by hiding in the ruined house. I afterward became well acquainted with this young man and found that he was living for just one thing—revenge.

#### IMPLACABLE ENEMIES, FAITHFUL FRIENDS

In Batang I know little boys who will undoubtedly be future victims of halen.

They are playing together as they grow up, but in the course of time, unless they are willing to be disgraced in the eyes of their friends, they must become sworn enemies and attempt to destroy each other because of events in the past history of their families.

Although these people are implacable in their hatreds, they are no less faithful to their friends. Two years ago, during the time when I was acting as mediator between the Chinese and the Tibetans and attempting to arrange an armistice while the fighting was going on, I spent some two months in Gartok, Tibet, as the guest of the Tibetan governor; also there at the same time was Lozong, the head of a band of brigands, who had come to ask the governor to permit him and his followers to take Batang for him.

During our stay, Lozong and I became quite good friends, often visiting each other. One day he proposed to me that we should be brothers. According to this custom among the people of Kham,

when two persons like each other very much they draw up an agreement declaring that they are brothers and that they will help and stand by each other through all things.

#### BECOMING A "BROTHER" OF A TIBETAN

When Lozong made the proposal I told him that I could not accept it.

"Why not?" said he, "we are friends."

"Yes," I replied, "I know we are good friends, but you occasionally kill people, and you rob, and you drink whiskey, and I cannot do these things."

He did not like that at all. He went away, but two or three days later he came back again.

"Well," he said, "if your religion will not allow you to become brother with me, since you say you came here to help people and not to kill them, what will your religion allow you to do?"

I told him something of our purpose and of our faith and he went away again. Two or three days later he came back, all smiles.

"I've got things all fixed up now," he said. "We can be brothers all right. I went up to the high priest this morning and took an oath that I will not kill anybody, that I will not rob, and that I will not drink whiskey."

I assured him that I was greatly pleased.

"Then," he said, as he reached inside his gown and pulled out a paper, "how is this?"

He had it all written out and proceeded to read the paper to me. It ran somewhat in this fashion:

"In view of the fact that General Lozong (he called himself General) and



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### WHERE A FALSE STEP MEANS DEATH: ALONG THE MEKONG RIVER

Safety apparently is not an important factor in the calculations of the Tibetan highway engineer, but he is not lacking in daring, a trait which he assumes the traveler as well as the road-builder to possess. These roads are never repaired until they break down completely.

Doctor Shelton have both taken an oath that they will not kill anybody, they will not rob any one, they will not drink whiskey, they have decided to be brothers."

He enumerated several other conditions, and in closing said: "And, furthermore, this is to give notice to any one that if you ever molest Doctor Shelton in any way I will bring a thousand men and wipe you off the face of the earth."

This paper is a pretty good passport in some parts of the country. And there





Photographs by Dr. A. L. Shelton

## MEN AND WOMEN THRESHING WITH FLAILS ON THE ROOF OF A BATANG HOME

Threshing methods are primitive throughout the East; but, with primitive transportation methods and small fields, a modern threshing-machine would be useless (see text, page 299).

is a sequel to this experience. A year and a half later, just before I left Batang, I received a letter from Lozong from about two hundred miles to the south, in which, after asking about my health and that of my family, he said:

"This is to inform you that I have rigidly kept my oath of a year and a half ago."

That some conception of Western ideals is not beyond the people of Tibet was indicated on another occasion by one of their leaders, the Galon Lama of Chiamdo. During my stay in Chiamdo I had many talks with the lamaist prelate about religion, politics, and many other topics of interest. Mostly, though, we discussed religion.

We found that there was not a great deal of difference in some of the commands of our two religions, but naturally there were many things that we could not agree upon. On parting from him, however, I made him a proposition which I was delighted to have him accept.

"There are some things on which we cannot agree," I said, "but I want to pro-

pose this to you and see if we cannot agree to it: That from this day forth you and I will work together for the good of our brother men."

"I can accept that," he replied, "with my whole heart."

## CAPTURED BY BANDITS

As a demonstration of his interest in philanthropy, the Markham Tigi, Governor of Lower Kham, assisted me in forwarding to the Dalai Lama at Lhasa a letter asking for permission to establish in the Forbidden City a hospital in which young Tibetans could be trained for medical work.

The Tibetan ruler sent a favorable reply, stating that, so far as he was concerned, he would be very glad to have the work undertaken in Lhasa, provided there were no foreign treaties to prevent.

It was my intention to establish the hospital without delay, but during a preliminary journey to the coast of China I was captured by Chinese bandits and received injuries which necessitated a trip to America. The establishment of a hos-





A CAULDRON WHICH HAS BEEN USED BY THE CHINESE FOR COOKING TIBETANS

Lovers of peace, haters of war and militarism, the Chinese are capable of extraordinary barbarities, which seem as natural to them as holding a chisel with their toes.



Photographs by Dr. A. L. Shelton

#### VARYING PENALTIES FOR LARCENY IN TIBET

One hand and one foot of the culprit at the right have been cut off, while the lesser offender, at the left, has been deprived of a hand only. Sometimes both hands are amputated.



Photograph by Dr. A. L. Shelton

A TIBETAN CEREMONIAL ALTAR ON WHICH DEAD BODIES ARE LAID PREPARATORY TO BEING DISMEMBERED AND FED TO VULTURES

The two men shown in the illustration are only posing to show how the bodies of natives are ordinarily placed.

pital in Lhasa has been delayed, but it is my intention to carry the project through eventually.

The Tibetans have been making great strides in the last few years, especially since the Younghusband Expedition in 1904 and 1905. Far from making them antagonistic to Westerners, this contact with the outer world has done more to break down prejudice and to give them a thirst for knowledge than all previous events in their circumscribed kingdom.

The treatment accorded the prisoners and populace by that expedition have become renowned all over Tibet. I met one of the captains who was wounded at Gyantse. He said to me in apparent astonishment:

"Do you know that after I had been

wounded I expected that they would kill me, but when they got me they didn't kill me at all. They took me and put me to bed and put medicine on my wound. They fed me and took care of me, and at last, when I got well, they not only let me go, but gave me a little money to get home with."

This man swears by the English.

During my stay in Chiamdo I met one man who had been in several of the capitals of Europe. The captain who was deputized to attend me had a son in London studying. Several officials had sons or relatives in India in the schools.

The fact that thirst for a knowledge of the world is making itself felt in Tibet argues well for the future of its virile, though socially undeveloped, people.